

tricts, may be almost or entirely incomprehensible to one who knows only the standard Pekingese, most of its forms are mutually intelligible—at least with a little practice. For example, a foreigner who has learned spoken Chinese toward the extreme southern limits of the *mandarin* area, say in Changsha in Hunan can understand and make himself understood as far east as Nanking and even in Hangchow (but not in the rural districts around Hangchow), as far west as the western borders of Szechwan or Kansu, and as far north as Heilungchiang. It is a form of *mandarin*, the *kuo yu*, or "national speech," it will be recalled, which the Chinese are now trying to make standard and to spread throughout the country, especially in *ncm-mandarin* speaking areas.

We have said that the Chinese spoken language differs in several ways from the tongues of the Occident. We have already noted the sharp distinction between it and what until recently was the most esteemed and generally used form of the written language. We have seen that it is without

inflections of case or tense. It is also without words formed by derivative affixes, such as *teach-er*, *coward-ice*, and *strict-ness*. In a sense it is monosyllabic. The number of vocables, moreover, is greatly limited.

There are no consonant groups, such as *scr* in *screech*, but only single consonants. It has been suggested, partly on the basis of the occurrence of consonant groups in modern Siamese and Tibetan, which are usually regarded as related to Chinese, that Chinese once had them. If it did, it has lost them and thereby has reduced the opportunity for multiplying the number of its vocables. Moreover, in *mandarin* words can be

ended only with
vowels and a limited number of the consonants—
roughly, *n*, *ng*,
and *r*. This means that the number of vocables is
very small—in
Peking *mandarin* only about four hundred and
thirty and in
other forms, such as the dialects of Canton and
Amoy, where a
wider range of final consonants permits a greater
variety, less
than a thousand.

With this exclusive use of uninflected
monosyllables and this
paucity of available vocables, it is obvious that
much confusion
might arise, for many quite diverse objects and
ideas must be
represented by the same vocable. Precision is
sought by several
interesting devices. Auxiliary words, both in the
written and in